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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) method appropriate for use in classrooms in China and offers a methodological framework with teaching principles. This method combines the communicative approach to language teaching with the more traditional grammar method. TESOL approaches in China are influenced by the national College Entrance Examination and the new Syllabus of China, and teaching methods must be in sync with these guides and encompass the theory of communicative language teaching. This new emphasis on communicative use as well as conscious cognition of language use may be called the communicative-cognition method. Using this approach, the teacher should only act as facilitator, advisor and monitor, co-communicator, and evaluator, while students should act as communicator. Emphasis should be on increased vocabulary teaching, ensuring that the student is the center of all classroom work, and increased practice without teacher explanation or interference. (Contains 14 references.) (NAV)

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Tradition and Innovation:
A New Way to Explore a TESOL Method

This paper explains how to create a TESOL method feasible in our classrooms according to our actual TESOL situations by combining the communicative approach with the traditional grammatically-oriented method and provides its methodological framework and teaching principles.

I. The CLT Merits and Demerits

The communicative language teaching (CLT) is an approach to foreign language teaching which emphasizes that the goal of language teaching is communicative competence. It better reflects the nature of language and the process of language acquisition and learning, which is reflected by the following special features:

(1) The CLT holds that language in essence is a tool for communication and that language should be learned through use and through communication, and thus making a radical reform on the traditional method and initiating a new era of the modern foreign language teaching. (2) The CLT insists that interactional speaking activities in the classroom be instances of real communication, based on a genuine information gap , thus making classroom activities as realistic as the real-life situation. (3) The CLT stresses two- way communication. The teacher usually brings students' initiative into full play and lets them become active agents communicating throughout the classes rather than passive recipients. (4) It ensures that students have sufficient exposure to the target language.This exposure provides many opportunities for language acquisition to occur. (5) The CLT embraces all the four language skills. By integrating listening, speaking, reading and writing, students can not only develop these skills but also constantly combine them in use as people use them in real life situations.

However, it is believed that the most obvious and direct demerit of communicative language teaching is its ignorance of the grammar or structure of the target language, as a consequence of the neglect of language forms. Once we take a close look at its theory and textbooks, we will soon be convinced that it does ignore language form, for it provides " a certain language form" only in "an acceptable way" for later communicative activities and during this communicative period, " the production of linguistic form becomes subordinate", and also because most textbooks designed for communicative purposes, such as Blundell's *Function in English* (1982), provide nothing concerning language form. This disadvantage will inevitably lead to further negative effects which are in exact opposition to the advantages of the fast language acquisition and grammatical accuracy of the grammar-oriented method:

(1) CLT makes English acquisition slow.

As grammar or structure deals with the rules and patterns of sentence making, the ignorance of it deprives ESOL learners of the means to make other sentences with, and thus prevents them from going beyond what they have come across in their study of English. Since the CLT ignores language grammar or structure, but focuses on each sentence's particular meaning, the students trained under it are most likely to be bound to what they have covered only, while the students trained under the grammar-oriented method are quite able to go beyond what they have learned. Thus, given a ceratin amount of time, the former students tend to learn less than the latter ones.

(2) CLT encourages some grammatical inaccuracy

Language is like an ocean consisting of many syntactic and lexical details as well as many functional and notional possibilities. Obviously no ESOL learner is able to cover all of them in his or her study. This is especially true of the students trained under the CLT, since they are bound to sentences' particular functions. Thus, they are sometimes unavoidably required to express what they have never

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come across in their study. In this case, they are forced to create something of their own. As they lack the knowledge of grammar, they are likely to make grammatically incorrect sentences. Therefore, the CLT encourages some grammar inaccuracy.

However, we know that the traditional method overlooks the communicative language teaching, but its certain elements have been useful and effective. For example, the pattern drill has been found a useful means to familiarize students with grammatical structures. Without a good grasp of the grammar, there would be no linguistic competence. So the pattern drill should be retained; but instead of drilling patterns for the sake of patterns, it is necessary that language structure practice is to be given on contexts which involve some basic principles of appropriacy. Besides, vocabulary work and translation have contributed much to students' language improvement. Therefore, the CLT problem can be solved by adding language knowledge into the practice of communicative teaching. Because "there is no single text or authority on communicative language teaching, nor any single model that is universally accepted as authoritative" (Gautom, 1988: 82), because its theoretical base is "somewhat eclectic" (Richards and Rodgers,1986:71), and because it is only an "approach" within which there can be many methods, we can use the communicative approach as an eclectic method, collecting strengths of the grammar translation method to teach language knowledge in the sense of counteracting its weaknesses. This is what we call the "combination".

II. Guidelines Underlying this Combination

When we consider the combination, there are some guidelines we must pay attention to:

(1) The Current TESOL Situation in our country

Because the teaching Syllabus is the guideline of our teaching contents and therefore teaching methods, we must choose a method according to it. For example, the new Syllabus of China states that

teaching aims of middle school English are "by training in listening, speaking, reading and writing, to teach students to gain basic English knowledge and competence to use English for communication." This states three teaching contents.The first is four skills and the second is the communicative competence which are gained better by using communicative approach. However, the third content is language knowledge, for which some useful and effective techniques such as pattern drill from the traditional method should be retained. Therefore, to achieve above three goals, both the communicative approach and traditional method should be combined together for classroom use.

Also in China, the National College Entrance Examination is the second largest influence determining a TESOL method.The English exam is one of the five exams for senior school graduates to pass into colleges and universities. Passing it is the most important consideration for students while learning. It has such a big influence to determine teaching contents and methods that it has been called the "baton". Therefore, its testing contents also determine the employment of reasonable and effective teaching methods and techniques. Other situations we should consider are: teacher capacity in English proficiency and knowledge about teaching methodology; student capacity in intelligence and native language, and traditional teaching elements in our country such as Chinese excellent teaching traditions like "reciting model texts", "reading extensively" and "working hard at writing".

(2) Eclecticism: a Current Trend of TESOL

In the field of foreign language teaching, the eclectic method is a compromise method which collects anything valuable to construct a methodological framework that may suit our own personal teaching style as well as the needs and interests of the students. The eclecticism confirms to the law of the development of foreign language teaching. A teaching method, at its early practice, was usually praised highly and actually had its own special advantages. But in the course of

application, because the teaching aims, teachers and students, teaching materials, conditions and environments altered, it inevitably became contradicted with all of them, so it had to be modified and improved in order to suit the new situations. The usual practice is to use one or two methods as a core while collecting many other advantages which were combined into an organic unity. Teaching experience also shows that it is rare for teachers to use only one method,but more frequent to use many advantages from different methods which are mixed together or use several methods at the same time. According to Omaggio (1986: 69-86), there are three kinds of modern adaptations of the direct method which have evolved to some extent from direct methodology: the Multiple Approach as well as a closely related variant known as the Verbal Active Method, Total Physical Response (TPR) and the Natural Approach. All of them do not preclude the explanation of grammar nor the use of the native language. In a word, the eclecticism is an unavoidable and normal phenomenon in foreign language teaching.

At the present time in China, the eclecticism is prevailing in universities and colleges. The College English Syllabus points out: "Strong points should be drawn from different approaches . Different approaches should be adopted for different students, different stages and different purposes" (1991: 10) . Many ESOL teachers in other countries are also using the eclectic method.In a word, "The current teaching methodology is to combine the merits of the past language teaching practices into some form of a viable language teaching method according to the learner's needs and the linguistic environment in which he is taught the target language"(Gautam,1988:25).

(3) A Lesson from the TESOL History

It is more than 100 years since the teaching methodology was studied as a branch of science. From this history, we find that the research for teaching methodology falls approximately into the following three periods:

The first period is in the 17-18th century. The then teaching theory, based on the rationalism, emphasized the development of intelligence and ability. Under its influence emerged the grammar translation method, which stresses language theory while neglecting language practice. The second period is in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The teaching theory, based on the empiricism, insisted on the development of language skills and habits. Under this influence evolved the structural linguistics and behavior psychology. The direct method and afterwards, the audio-lingual method and audio-visual methods gave tit for tat towards the traditional school, putting forward that language learning is a process of skill training and habit formation, but not of intellectual activities. The third period is in the 1960s-70s. The cognitive psychology and then Noam Chomsky's theory of transformational generative grammar restressed intelligence and abilities. Based on these theories, the cognitive appróach was created which stresses the language knowledge again. It is clear that this point of viev is very similar to that of the traditional school,but it does not devalue language practice but requires visual aids and teaching situations - this is to carry forward the advantage of the structural school.

From the above three periods we can draw a lesson from the development of teaching methodology. The research for teaching methodology was focused on the relationship between language knowledge and practice and went through a U-shaped course - first stressed, then unstressed and finally restressed the language knowledge. Thus, "language-teaching methods have followed the pendulum of fashion from one extreme to the other"(Mackey, 1965:138). The fault was to set two sides of a contradiction against each other and to overemphasize one side while negating the other as a result of going to extremes. This is a lesson we should remember:language knowledge and practice should not be separated.

III. This Combination: A Methodological Framework

Judging from the above reasoning, we can now conclude that to create our TESOL method with our own characteristics, we should use the theory of communicative language teaching as a core while collecting other advantages of any existing methods and also excellent teaching traditions of our country. All these advantages are dialectically and organically combined together in perfect harmony and developed into an eclectic method with a teaching aim at the linguistic and communicative competences. Stressing communicative use of language as well as conscious cognition of language usages, it may be tentatively called the "communicative- cognition method". Its framework about the roles of the teacher and students as well as teaching materials and procedures is described as follows:

1. Teacher's Role as a Facilitator.

(1) Manager and organizer of classroom activities. In this role, "one of the major responsibilities is to establish situation likely to promote communication"(Larshen Freeman, 1986:131),trying "to organize the classroom as a setting for communication and communicative activities"(Richards and Rodgers, 1986:78). Language is not spoken in a vacuum and communication takes place in a real situation, so classroom communicative activities should not be performed abstractly but realistically in an appropriate situation. The teacher should set up situation by using words, visual aids,teacher's facial expressions, gestures, actions, etc. in classes where students exchange messages, solve problems to bridge the information gap, thus language is learned as it is actually used in real life situation.

(2) Adviser and monitor. During learning activities, some students may have learning difficulties and need help, others may have problems and confusions to be settled, so the teacher is "expected to exemplify an effective communicator seeking to maximize the meshing of speaker intention and learner interpretation, through the use of paraphrase, confirmation and feedback"(Richards and Rodgers,1986: 78). He or she

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may walk around the classroom to a particular group, pair or individual to solve problems. Still other students may be not communicating effectively and making errors during conversation, so the teacher should also act as a monitor.

(3) Co-communicator. At other times, the teacher might act as an independent participant with the students, thus ensuring the two- way communication in class. However,the teacher is not a communicator for main purposes in order not to occupy students' communicating time. He or she is only to demonstrate how to do activities, to help weaker students or to substitute an absent student.

(4) Evaluator. To examine how good students' performance in class is, and how much degree of their linguistic and communicative competences they have gained, the teacher should also act as an evaluator so as to improve his/her teaching if the evaluation does not reach the desired goal. The teacher can informally evaluate students' performance on the role as an advisor, monitor or co- communicator. For some formal evaluation, the teacher is likely to use the integrative communicative test which contains "rules of speaking" as well as "rules of grammar".

2. Students' Role as a Communicator.

"Students, above all, communicator. They are actively engaged in negotiating meaning - in trying to make themselves understood - even when their knowledge of the target knowledge is incomplete. They learn to communicate by communicating"(Larshen-Freeman, 1986:131). Therefore the teacher should device a variety of activities for students to perform in order to develop communicative competence.

"Since the teacher's role is less dominant than in a teacher-centered method, students are seen as more responsible manager of their own learning" (Ibid,1986:131). This means that students must know not only why to learn but also how to learn. Therefore, the teacher should help students to acquire scientific , effective method of study so that students may gradually learn to work and achieve success on their own.

3. Teaching Materials

Richards and Rodgers said, "practitioners of CLT view materials as a way of influencing the quality of classroom interaction and language use. Materials thus have the primary role of promoting communicative language use."(1986:79). The use of authentic language materials is expected to (1) overcome the typical problem that students are unable to transfer what they learn in traditional classes to the real situation outside the class and (2) to expose students to natural language in a variety of situation. Moreover, authentic materials are potentially more interesting than texts which have been specially contrived for language teaching purposes.

Because the authentic materials are designed for native speakers, they are may be too difficult to be materials to many ESOL students with lower proficiency. There are two solutions to this problem. One is to use simpler authentic material (eg. the use of a weather forecast when working on predictions), or at least materials that are realistic. The other is to use realia that do not contain a lot of language, but about which a lot of discussion would be generated. Menus and timetables are two examples.

4. Teaching Procedures

As regards to the teaching procedures used in a lesson based on CLT principles, there are controversies. Some CLT practitioners believe that the teacher should provide communicative practice from the start of the instruction, which is a reversal of the traditional procedures. According to Brumfit(1980:121), the traditional procedure is "present -> drill-> practice in context", but the communicative procedure is "communicate -> present -> drill if necessary".

To this communicative procedure, other practitioners suspect that ESOL students in non-English-speaking environment are able to use new language for communication effectively before they have gained enough individual skills of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. How can students use "How about going to see the ship? " to make a

suggestion if they may have confused "ship" with "sheep" in sounds and are unable to pronounce other words correctly? They argue that even if they can, then the communication may be not very effective. So they conclude that it is not advisable to provide communicative practice before students have mastered the new language in the skills of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. According to Littlewood, ESOL students need the structural practice and quasi-communicative activity before going into communicative activities at the second stage as his teaching model illustrates:

Pre-communicative activities
- Structural activities
- Quasi-communicative activities

Communicative activities
- Functional communicative activities
- Social interaction activities

(Littlewood, 1981:86)

Considering different points mentioned above, it may be practical to consider how the strengths of both the traditional procedures and the communicative procedures might be combined so as to solve the problem of "language-knowledge shortage". Our suggestion is to combine the above necessary procedures into the following six-stage procedures: Review -> present -> drill -> communicative-> drill in necessary -> consolidation.

More specifically, after *revieving* old lessons, the teacher begins the new lesson to learn new language. -> He *presents* new language, either in spoken or written form, by necessary explanation and/or demonstration in teaching situations to make pronunciations, forms and meanings as clear as possible. ->Then by asking questions or by using

teaching aids or gestures,etc. he *drills* the items, using mechanical, meaningful and communicative drills with stress on making correct forms and structures,to help students consolidate previous learning and form language habits and skills. ->Next he organizes students to *practice communicative activities* of various types to use the new items for communication. -> Finally, *if necessary drill* the items students have not mastered and then go on for *consolidation* of above achievements and for development of writing skills by practicing written activities. It is clear that the presentation is for students to understand new language items;the drill is to master the items to develop the linguistic competence; the practice is to develop the ability to use the items for communication; and the consolidation is to form the two competences.

IV. Develop Both Linguistic Competence and Communicative Competence

Linguistic competence refers to the mastery of basic language knowledge about phonetics, vocabulary and grammar. Communicative utterances must be superficially well-formed and acceptable in these three aspects. The communicative competence generally refers to the ability to use the well-formed sentences to express communicative functions effectively and appropriately. As a matter of fact, language is a communicative tool,learning of which without any communicative functions will certainly lead to the divorce of application. Although both the linguistic and communicative competences are needed for effective communication, they are not equally important. Linguistic competence is prerequisite for communicative competence, without which there is no communicative competence to speak of. But such an ability has little value on its own. It has to be supplemented by knowledge of using sentences appropriately in communication to perform a variety of functions. Moreover, "overemphasis on drills and exercises for the production and reception of sentence tends to inhibit the development

of communicative abilities" (Widdowson,1978:67). In the process of teaching, therefore, the teacher should not only impart necessary language knowledge but also provide as much practice as possible for students to acquire the ability to use the language for communication. Just as Allright pointed out: "teaching comprehensively for linguistic competence will necessarily leave a large area of communicative competence untouched, whereas teaching equally comprehensively for communicative competence will necessarily cater for all but a small part of linguistic competence"(1979: 168) . To develop the two competences, we should have the following teaching principles:

Principle One: Perform Communicative Activities and Introduce the Information Gap

To develop communicative competence, we should introduce communicative activities into classrooms. According to teaching contents we set up communicative situations and motivate students to participate in such activities as role plays, simulations and social interactions in a near-natural linguistic and social environment to learn to use English for communication. These activities are a model of eclecticism, adopting teaching principles of many methods, thus being more scientific and reasonable. Take a role play for example:

Student A: You like dancing and going to discos.Suggest to your partner that you go out this evening. Try to persuade him/her to go where you prefer.

Student B: You don't like dancing and going to discos.You prefer going to the cinema or to a concert. Try to persuade your partner to go where you prefer.

There are five teaching principles implicit in this activity: 1) information gap from the communicative approach because students are not allowed to peep at the partners' cues; 2) situation from the situational approach. The dialogue is supposed to happen on the

telephone exchange or at any one of the partner's home; 3) student-centeredness from the cognitive approach because activities are performed chiefly by students; 4) using the target language, and no native language being allowed from the direct method,and 5) pattern drill from the structural method on the structures such as "How about going to...? " etc.

As we have shown above in the teaching procedure section, Littlewood's communicative activities have two types. One is "functional communicative activity", to complete a task such as comparing sets of pictures and noting similarities and differences and solving problems from shared cues. The successful criterion is functional effectiveness.The other is "social interaction activity" which has a social context. It includes conversation and discussion sessions, dialogues and role plays,simulations and improvisations. The successful criterion is appropriate use of language as well as effective expression of functions.

Information gap is the essence of communication. But in traditional classroom teaching, activities always lack the information gap. Many teachers often ask students: "Are you a student?" or ask a student holding a pen in his hand: "Do you have a pen?" This kind of dialogues lack information gap because they are exchanging information already known to both sides. So it is not communicative. For remedies, the following teaching techniques are suggested for classroom use:

1. Try to use gap languages

Stubbs notices that people often use the following sentences to exchange information: *If we do this, then_____; we may/might/ could_____; What do you mean? I don't understand; What I mean is_____; What you mean to say is_____.* etc.(1976) . In order to reduce or even prevent non- gap dialogues and to make teaching realistic to social life, the teacher should often use these sentences and the similar expressions such as "What do you mean? I can't understand your meaning, please explain. Please sum up what you said.

Do you agree? Why or why not? " Thus students think and use language creatively and improvisationally.

2. Transform to communicative drills

If the teacher does need non-gap drills to demonstrate meanings or practice structures,he should transform them to communicative drills to ensure what Rivers calls "the great leap forward" to communication. There are three such drills suggested:(1) imaginable drills. Students learn to gain information in an imaginable situation such as in a street to practice "Where is...?" "It is...." (2) guessing games. Students gain information by guessing. e.g. by using "Have you...?" to guess what the partner's picture is about? (3) true questions. For example, after drilling mechanically "My father is a doctor", the teacher asks students individually to answer "What's your father? " with the name of their father's real profession.

3. Transform further to communicative activities

According to Littlewood, communicative drills are not communicative activities, but belong to "pre-communicative activities" which train "part-skills" in order to lay a foundation to do communicative activities for training of "total skill"(1988) . Therefore, pre-communicative activities should be transformed to communicative activities to develop communicative competence.

Principle Two: Concise explanation and ample practice

Language is best learned through practice. Learning a language has much in common with learning such a skill as swimming, which can only be formed after great numbers of practical activities. So Otto Jesperson required the teacher to "plunge the pupil right down into the sea of language and enable him to swim by himself" who needs not "learning too many special rules or the aid of elaborate explanation." Much talk by the teacher is no way to teach a language. It causes little practice by students.It substitutes teaching for learning. It prevents students from learning. Therefore, the teacher should make

explanation as concise as possible and strictly limit teacher's talking time(TTT),so as to leave more of the each period for students' talking time (STT). The most successful class is one where students, not the teacher, do most of the classroom work. As a general rule, class explanation should on the average take no more than one-third of the total time of each period and practice take two-third or more.

To ensure students' ample practice, it is important to motivate students to learn. Only strongly motivated students are active and can learn English quickly. Successful classroom teaching involves students' active participation as well as the teacher's role to motivate students' initiative. The motivation includes: 1) begin English teaching with "learning aims education" to clear about learning puoposes; 2) cultivate students' interest; 3) teach students according to their language aptitudes; 4) teach students to acquire scientific and effective methods of study so that they may gradually learn to work and achieve success

Principle Three: Stress Both Accuracy and Fluency

As to the language accuracy and fluency, the teacher should not take precedence of one over the other. ESOL students are to be competent English language users who must have a solid foundation in English which the Syllabus has required. A solid foundation is primarily, though by no means solely, accuracy. Bad language habits once formed are difficult to eradicate afterwards. However, by accuracy we do not advocate 100% error-free exactness, which is impossible to achieve. But during the mechanical drills of language at the beginning of each class, a high degree of accuracy is required of students. They are not only allowed to make as few errors as possible, but also expected to use language improvisationally and creatively. As a matter of fact, the improvisation and creation have already included the fluency. But of course, fluency goes beyond accuracy. Immediately after students have mastered new language, they must be

given fluency practice. Then control is withdrawn and they are expected to use language more freely. At this stage, errors should be tolerated, and the teacher should make it clear to students that errors-making is a natural and common occurrence. Even so,a summing-up assessment of students' performance should be made at the end of each fluency practice, so that the students are aware of their weakness and become more and more error-conscious. In this way, accuracy practiced and fluency practice are done almost simultaneously class after class. In short, accuracy and fluency are interdependent, they are not mutually exclusive and they are not in conflict with each other. A rigorous training in language skills can and should go hand in hand with constant fluency practice, even from the very beginning.

Principle Four: Use English as Much as Possible; Use the native language when Necessary

This principle deals with the contradiction between the use of target language and the native one in language classroom. Historically, there are two extremes on this contradiction. Some methods such as the grammar-translation method depends on the native language.Others such as the direct method excludes or avoids use of it. Between these two extremes is our eclecticism which insists on using both languages. As a principle, English must be used as much as possible,not only during communicative activities but also in conducting lessons throughout the classes while the native language can be used when necessary.

1. Much Use of English

We prefer the monolingual teaching and more object teaching for many reasons. A rich English-speaking environment is a decisive factor for successful language learning. Only in a rich linguistic environment can four skills be gained quicker and better. Second, the use of English for communicative activities and for classroom management exchanges will make students realize that the English is a vehicle for communication, not just as object to be studied. Third, the measure of

students' mastery of English is their ability to think in it. Any use of the native language encourages students to think in it and meanwhile discourages students from thinking in English. In a word, use of English may facilitate learning of English.

English may be possibly used to conduct lessons from the very beginning. At junior grade one, students have a good imitation and memory ability, so much the native language explanation is not needed. Their introduction courses are simple and easier to learn and can be taught by using visual aids and by setting up teaching situations. At the later stage, use of English still remains possible and even expands. With the improvement of students' language knowledge and abilities, the chances of English explanation become greater, and the role of the native language weakens gradually. Practical experience shows that a ratio of about 10% the native language to about 90% English is possible and this would be more profitable for English teaching.

2. Limited Use of the native language

Although the native language has no particular role in English teaching, there are also some reasons to use it in class. As a means of teaching, for example, it can help to get meaning across and to prevent possible misunderstanding or confusion and avoid time-consuming in the presentation of new teaching items by English. By the time students start learning English, the native language has taken a firm hold of their mind . In an English class in China, mental translation is going on at all times, so total exclusion of the native language is not possible.

However, the native language should not be overused as is often the case in traditional classes. Too much native language explanation makes students spend time not in learning English directly but in learning about it, thus obstructing the development of target language skills. Also, students who habitually resort to translation to the native language will never achieve ease and fluency in English . The most proficient students do not translate when using English. Therefore,

the native language should be used sparingly and with great care, which is limited to: (1) illustrate the place of articulation, (2) explain meanings of abstract words and expressions, (3) check students' level of comprehension, and (4) compare with the native language when necessary.

3. Translation as a means of teaching

Translation at the secondary level should be used mainly as a means to help language teaching, but used with great care and limited in the following: to check students' understanding, to teach certain words or structures which are difficult to teach by other means, or to give the meanings of dialogues for memorization. Translation should not be a substitute for language practice. It takes time away from practice of other skills which students are more likely to need if they want to speak and write fluent English; and students, thinking that words are equivalent, erroneously assume that their translation can be extended to the same situations as the original and as a result make mistakes.

Principle Five: Develop Integratively All Four Skills with Varying Stresses on Particular Skills at Different Stages

The communicative competence includes the use of skills to listen, speak, read and write. To communicate effectively, people must be able to understand and speak as well as to read and write the language. Without these four skills, people have no ability for production and reception. So they should be developed in an all-round way. According to psychology, the employment of multiple senses, auditory, visual and kinesthetic is better than that of just one sense in learning a language. So the comprehensive training in the four skills contributes to the development of the ability to use language for communication better and faster.

However, the six-year learning process is complicated by the fact that students are undergoing physical and emotional changes while having to learn English which becomes more and more complex and difficult every day. This causes the entire secondary English teaching to have different teaching objectives, different teaching stages, different teaching methods and even different stresses on skills at different stages. Thus, the whole process is always composed of three stages: elementary (junior grade 1 and 2), intermediate (junior grade 3 and senior grade 1) and advanced(senior grade 2 and 3). This division is set by the teaching tasks at each stage which must be completed before the next stage can possibly begin. As to the four skills, they are developed at the same fine at each stage; but the scientifically valid order for presentation of skills is: listening and speaking first, followed by reading and writing with a final comprehensive development of the four skills.

At the *elementary stage*, the young students have some special physical and psychological features: (1) their ability to imitate is greater than that of senior grade students; (2) they are less shy and less afraid of making errors, which is favorable to learning aural-oral skills; (3) aural-oral skills require quick responses, which is young students' advantage; and (4) students are interested in spoken language which is usually more closely related to everyday life. These features determine that teaching emphasis should be laid on spoken language and on oral communication about daily life.

The chief task, therefore, is to develop abilities to listen and speak in combination with learning of pronunciation and intonation. However, this does not mean to overlook reading and writing. On the contrary, they should receive due attention from the very beginning to help reinforce what has been learned aural-orally. After students have practiced listening to a given body of language content, they should strengthen their control of it by practicing it in reading and writing situations. In view of above teaching tasks, the teaching order

should be: listening and speaking first, followed by reading and writing. The teaching methods consist primarily of communicative approach and partially of the traditional method as well as Chinese excellent teaching traditions.

The *intermediate stage* is a transitional stage. The chief teaching tasks are: (1) in junior grade three,to enable students to apply the learned knowledge to improve their skills of listening, speaking and writing, then begin to concentrate on training of students' reading skill;(2) in senior grade one to lay special stress on correlation of the materials from junior to senior, help students consolidate the knowledge learned in junior class and enhance their ability to apply the language, in particular, to develop their reading skill and ability to study by themselves. In view of these tasks, the teaching emphasis should be gradually transferred to reading and writing while listening and speaking are still kept on training with an aim at an all-round development of all four skills at the end of this stage. The teaching methods, therefore, should rely on integrative use of the best teaching techniques from the traditional method, communicative approach and some others.

At the *advanced Stage*, students have acquired a certain level of ability to listen and speak, a number of vocabulary and most of the basic grammar. Therefore, in senior grade two, a special emphasis is now transferred to training of reading skill. In senior grade three, the teacher is supposed to, based on a systematic sum-up of learned knowledge, lay a special emphasis on training reading skill, take further measure to develop their ability to listen, speak and write and study on their own, thus completing the aims and tasks set by the Syllabus: an all-round development of four skills, with an emphasis on reading.

Actually, the four skills are not of the same value. In China, for example, reading is the most important for most students. It is a skill which students are required to acquire at school and continue to

use after leaving school. Generally speaking, the great majority of graduates will not encounter English foreigners in China or go abroad. But they may have plenty of opportunities to read books, newspapers and magazines, and even to read and translate the literature of science, technology, culture and art later. "It is likely that developing countries such as China, belonging to receptive type, should lay stress on reading skill in English language teaching" (Zhang, et al, 1993:292).

In view of these tasks, vocabulary teaching should be greatly increased for more receptive vocabulary being mastered , and meanwhile, teach students how to analyze grammatically long and complex sentences for developing an ability to understand sentences through pattern structures .The teaching methods come mainly from the best techniques favorable for the reading skill from the grammar-translation method, and partially from communicative approach.

We have given above only tentative frmework and basic principles as a model of our combination. There undoubtedly are other kinds of models.Now matter what framework and principles,we should never lose sight of the following three important aspects: (1) the aim of TESOL is to develop students' linguistic and communicative competences through effective training on the four skills to listen, speak, read and write; (2) the main task of conducting lessons is to get students to practice using English as much as possible with a minimum and necessary amount of teacher's explanation; and (3) the primary principle is to ensure that students not the teacher are in the center of all classroom work; the teacher is only the facilitator.

V. Conclusion

Finally we will briefly summarize our ways concerning the creation of a TESOL method with our own characteristics with reference to our attitude, means and goal: (1) our attitude is trying to study, inherit

and assimilate as many advantages of teaching methods as possible, whether ancient or modern, Chinese or foreign. This is an attitude with an open outlook to all the times and all the countries in order to be completely eclectic; (2) our means to create a method has both critical and heritable features. In this way, we have taken both affirmation and negation of a method. This is very similar to the Hegel's concept of "sublate" in philosophy; (3) our goal to create the method is completely based on our current teaching reality in order to help change the TESOL outlook at the secondary level for the better and to propel the TESOL forward into modernization.

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